

SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL IN AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

SPECIAL FORCES COMMAND AND CONTROL IN AFGHANISTAN, by Richard G. Rhyne, 70 pages.

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of the command and control relationship between Special Forces and conventional forces. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan serves as a case study in practice and doctrinal application. Against the backdrop of World War II, Operations in Panama, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, this thesis provides an analysis of the complex issues arising from the necessity to fight jointly.

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ACRONYMS

ACOM	Atlantic Command
ADCON	Administrative Control
C2	Command and Control
CENTCOM	Central Command
CFLCC	Coalition Forces Land Component Command
CFLCC-FWD	Coalition Forces Land Component Command Forward
CFSOCC	Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
COCOM	Combatant Command
DIRLAUTH	Direct Liaison Authorized
JSOTF	Joint Special Operations Task Force
JTF	Joint Task Force
MTT	Mobile Training Team
OPCON	Operational Control
SF	Special Forces
SOCOM	Special Operations Command
TACON	Tactical Control
TF	Task Force
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
UNOSOM	United Nations Operations Somalia

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Abraham Lincoln

From the very beginning of Special Forces-type missions, there has been an overarching problem with command and control (C2) as a function of integration with conventional forces. Special Forces are considered unconventional in tactics, techniques, and procedures. After 1986, joint publications (JPs) provided the strategic, operational, and tactical guidance for future campaigns including guidance for integration. However, the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 ushered in an era of warfare that continues to challenge conventional wisdom about integration and C2 relationships.

The Research Question

Using the operational situation in Afghanistan, what is the optimal C2 relationship between Army Special Forces and conventional forces?

Subordinate Questions

1. Why is C2 so important?
2. What has been the historical precedent for C2 of Special Forces?
3. What is the joint doctrine for C2 of Special Forces?
4. How was doctrine implemented in Operation Enduring Freedom?
6. Did the C2 of Special Forces in Afghanistan work?

7. How does a C2 relationship effect integration of Special Forces and conventional forces?

8. What change if any should be considered in joint doctrine?

Limitations

1. This thesis does not use any classified documents. The term special operation forces, denotes special operation forces not included under the highest categories of classification. The units that are conducting operations that are top secret mission are called Tier 1 forces. Special operation forces have the ability to work in a full spectrum of classified and nonclassified environments. The units in this study fall under the heading of tier 3 forces. No reference occurs to units under the Joint Special Operations Command in Afghanistan.

2. The majority of the information of C2 in Afghanistan constitutes very recent raw data. In June 2002, Joint Task Force-180 had the full control of all operations in Afghanistan. Materials on Operation Enduring Freedom do not benefit from the kind of perspective that comes with time.

3. Interviews have their own advantages and disadvantages. To reduce bias this study relies on multiple interviews for purposes of cross-checking. This study uses interviews to point out how doctrine was interpreted to dictate the C2 relationships that exist today in Afghanistan. Materials for analysis include interviews with commanders or personnel who were in staff positions in the Joint Special Operation Task Force and Joint Task Force in Afghanistan.

4. The information in this thesis focuses on Army Special Forces in Afghanistan.

5. Historical precedent informs much of the comparison and analysis, but fuller examination of the precedent lies outside the parameters of this thesis.

Author's Qualification

The author of this thesis was introduced to special operations in 1992. Upon completion of the Special Forces qualification course, and after serving as a detachment commander, the author was tasked in 1996 to support the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, supporting GEN Henry Shelton, the XVIII Airborne Corps Commander. The author was designated as the special operations C2 cell for the XVIII Airborne Corps BCTP.

In 2000, the author commanded Bravo Company 1st Battalion 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), and was selected to take his company to Bosnia under the 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) Commander MG Walter Sharp. MAJ Rhyne commanded six Special Forces teams under the guidance of Joint Special Operation Task Force (JSOTF) in Sarajevo. He provided the C2 and the coordination efforts as the special operation C2 cell (SOCCE). The Special Forces teams were Administrative Control (ADCON) to the SOCCE and OPCON to the JSOTF. Under the SOCCE's leadership, the operational detachments conducted operations as Joint Commissioned Observers. Operational detachments that conducted direct action missions were placed TACON to the SOCCE. The author was present for all meetings by the JTF, JSOTF, and SFOR commanders' discussions on C2 relationships of Special Forces in theater.

In April 2002, the author became operations officer for the 3rd Special Forces Group. When the group deployed to Afghanistan, the author became the Deputy J3 of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) in Afghanistan, and the Joint Operation

Center director. The Joint Operation Center director is the current operations officer of the JSOTF. He spent ten months in Afghanistan as the current operations officer and deputy J3 during the integration with the 10th Mountain Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the Joint Task Force Afghanistan whose nucleus was the 18th Airborne Corps.

Methodology

The heart of this thesis lies in a historical case study of C2 relationships pertaining to the employment of Special Forces in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The significance of this case study flows from several important considerations. First, OEF witnessed the first large-scale employment of SF with conventional forces after the onset of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Second, the author served in capacities that enabled him to observe first-hand many of the difficulties associated with C2 during fast-moving situations. And, third, these difficulties--especially as they manifested themselves in Afghanistan--appeared amendable to a “lessons learned” style of analysis that might give rise to recommendations for avoiding future pitfalls.

A series of methodological steps governed the development of this case study. The initial step was to define the nature of the problem, then restate it as the primary research question. Problem definition further required the enunciation of a series of subordinate research questions as earlier outlined. In the aggregate, these questions served to focus the research and writing efforts. The next step was to gather pertinent information. That information embraced a variety of materials, ranging from a survey of relevant doctrine to interviews with participants in the actual events under scrutiny.

Case study analysis extended beyond the parameters of OEF to include historical precedent. In tracing that precedent, the selection and examination of historical materials was governed by their relevance to the primary and subordinate research questions. The same criterion applied to the analysis of past and present doctrine.

Any case study relies heavily on methods unique to historical analysis. Once having defined the problem under consideration, that common practice requires the investigators to immerse themselves in the available primary and secondary materials. Immersion essentially means that these materials must be subjected to a rigorous examination to determine pertinence, perspective, value, veracity, and bias. In so far as possible, the results of collection and examination then enable the researcher to reconstruct a reasonably accurate narrative concerning what actually happened and why. In methodological perspective, interviews present a special problem requiring the application of normal practices, but with the addition of due care to focus the interviews and to apply uniform criteria for content and veracity.

A final major methodological concern involved the requirement to judge the effectiveness of C2 relationships under various circumstances. Although in the end success tends to provide self-justification and vindication, success proceeds from many causes, some purely accidental. To resolve this issue, this thesis applies criteria from the commonly accepted Principles of War as measurements of effectiveness and, to a lesser extent, of causation. The governing principles included unity of command, unity of effort and economy of force. These principles were the ones that were most directly reflected in considerations of C2.

These criteria governed evaluation in several ways. If the criteria were not met in a given situation, and if the outcome was negative, then the C2 arrangement was considered less than optimum. If the three criteria were met, and if the outcome was positive, then C2 arrangements were considered optimum. Analysis tended to demonstrate that no case studies produced a positive outcome without meeting the criteria. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that a positive response to the criteria correlates strongly with the application of sound C2 arrangements.

Thesis Outline

Chapter 1 provides a guide to perplexities and vexations inherent in the command relationship between Special Forces and conventional forces. This chapter identifies the key conditions that provide the foundation of C2 relationships for later analysis. Chapter 2 constitutes the literature review. It provides an introduction to the sources of this thesis: Internet, Journals, theses, newspapers, books, and interviews. Chapter 3 surveys the integration of Special Forces and conventional forces, starting with initial experiences during World War II, continuing through Vietnam, Panama, Operation Desert Storm, Haiti, and stopping short of 11 September 2001. Chapter 3 provides the historical basis for comparison with the present situation in Afghanistan, the subject of analysis in chapter 4. Chapter 4 will provide an overview to the campaign in Operations Enduring Freedom and the status quo of the C2 relationship. It will provide the doctrine that was followed and how it was implemented. This chapter will analyze the proficiency of the doctrinal application during the integration of Special Forces and conventional forces. The last part of chapter four will cover comparisons with integration of the past with that of Afghanistan. Chapter 5 will conclude with a recommendation on how to improve the

integration process through either changes in C2 or joint doctrine. Chapter 5 will include additional problems that the author views as corresponding problems affecting C2.

Significance of Study

The vast interpretations of doctrine, in regards to the C2 relationships, tactics, techniques, and procedures of Special Forces nested directly OPCON to the Joint Task Force causes friction and complications among staffs. This thesis will outline possible problems, which might exist under the present C2 relationship provided under joint doctrine. It will define the reasons that the present configurations exist, and ways in which different C2 relationships or supporting coordination and support structures might benefit, if accepted. Flexible doctrinal guidance can be perceived by some as the reliant ingredient in the ever-changing integrated demand. The ambiguous doctrinal guidance can be seen as a hindrance to successful operations due to improper use of assets or capabilities. This thesis will provide future readers and researchers with insight to the problems that existed in Afghanistan and the reasons that specific C2 measures were taken. Interviews with individuals in leadership and staff positions will reveal the mitigating circumstances as to how they chose to make their decisions. The conclusion will provide the authors analysis and recommendations in C2. This analysis will provide the readers with answers to their questions when pertaining to C2 relationships under a Special Forces and conventional integration.

Terms Defined

Combatant Command (COCOM). Combatant command (command authority) cannot be delegated and is the authority of a combatant commander to perform those

functions of command over assigned forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to the command (JP 1-02).

Combatant Commander. A unified or specified command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Combatant commands typically have geographic or functional responsibilities (JP1-02).

Command and Control (C2). The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission (JP 1-02).

Command Relationships. The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the authority of commanders in the chain of command (JP 1-02).

Direct Liaison Authority (DIRLAUTH). That authority granted by a commander (any level) to a subordinate to directly consult or coordinate an action with a command or agency within or outside of the granting command. Direct liaison authorized is more applicable to planning than operations and always carries with it the requirement of keeping the commander granting direct liaison authorized informed. Direct liaison

authorized is a coordination relationship, not an authority through which command may be exercised (JP 1-02).

Joint Doctrine. Fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces of two or more services in coordinated action toward a common objective (JP 1-02).

Operational Control (OPCON). Transferable command authority that may be exercised by commanders at any echelon at or below the level of combatant command. Operational control may be delegated and is the authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Operational control does not, in and of itself, include authoritative direction for logistics or matters of administration, discipline, internal organization, or unit training (JP 1-02).

Support (Supported/Supporting). The action of a force which aids, protects, complements, or sustains another force in accordance with a directive requiring such action (JP 1-02).

Tactical Control (TACON). Command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking, that is limited to the detailed and, usually, local direction and control of movements or maneuvers necessary to accomplish mission or tasks assigned (JP 1-02).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In battle there are only normal and extraordinary forces, but their combinations are limitless; none can comprehend them all.

Sun Tzu

The overall objective of the thesis is to provide the reader background information sufficient to understand Army Special Forces (SF) and Army conventional force command and control (C2) in the joint operational environment. Joint doctrinal publications provide the guidance for these relationships. In addition, there are several articles that critique or expand upon this doctrine. The historical information included in this thesis provides alternate views on how SF-Conventional forces worked together in the past. This literature, articles, and books covering Vietnam, Somalia, Panama, Haiti, Desert Storm, and Bosnia offer insights into the integration of SF and conventional forces. The third element of the literature review, directly deals with SF and Conventional operations in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a key case study in the evolution of C2 where US forces carried out a successful, complex, and integrated unconventional warfare campaign. The majority of literature that is found concerning Operation Enduring Freedom is very recent, chronologically. The fourth section of the literature review is a discussion of the interviews that provide critical inputs to this thesis.

The Joint and Service Doctrinal Foundations

Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, 14 November 2000, outlines the principles of war and fundamentals of joint warfare that support the criteria used in the analysis section of this thesis. JP 1 explains the role of

joint doctrine, and provides an introduction to the unified command. It presents the importance of the joint ness and how unified commands were established to ensure this unity of effort. JP 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces, 10 July 2001*, provides descriptions of the amendments, laws, and policies that were established to provide for unity of command under the combatant commanders. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act and the follow-on Nunn-Cohen Amendment that created United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is the basis for this doctrine. JP 0-2 outlines the governing policies and laws for Combatant Command (COCOM) and the other accepted joint command relationships. JP 0-2 provides a clear delineation of the responsibilities of COCOM. COCOM provides the inherent OPCON relationship of those assigned units under a combatant command. This is key during the conclusion of this thesis. For definitions of COCOM, OPCON, TACON, SUPPORT and DIRLAUTH see key terminology. JP 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations, 10 September 2001*, provides an overview of joint operations and C2 predominately for the conventional forces with few insights on SF-Conventional C2. JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, 17 April 1988*, highlights that the primary purpose of SF is to support the theater commander not lower level service elements. JP 3-05 makes it very clear that Special Forces should be used in an offensive spirit and to complement, not to replace the conventional fight. It outlines the different capabilities of Special Forces and how it should affect the decision-making process when assigning command and control of forces. JP 3-05.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations, 19 December 2001*, explains the functions and responsibilities of the Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF). The JSOTF is a Special Operations headquarters formed

by the theater special operations command (TSOC) with the approval of the Combatant Command. JP 3-05.1 does an excellent job explaining the many ways in which you can form a JSOTF. It also explains the difficulties with which a JSOTF is confronted and some of the normal techniques that the Commander JSOTF (COMJSOTF) may utilize to provide the service, support, and command and control of the SF in theater. This publication also goes into the other Special Forces coordination cells and elements that are found in JTFs subordinate to a combatant commander and how they relate to the JSOTF.

“Integrating Special Forces into Joint War Fighting,” by LTC Mark Jones and LTC Wes Rehorn, found in the *Military Review*, May-June 2003, is an excellent discussion of how SF can be the supported or the supporting force to joint conventional formations. Both of these authors were part of the US Joint Forces Special Operations Command (JFSOC) that is responsible for training Special Forces personnel in the joint aspects of planning and executing military operations across the spectrum. This article outlines how flexible the joint doctrine is and how it can be tailored to fit a wide variety of missions. However, the author assumes the reader has a detailed knowledge of the existing doctrine. David Jablonsky’s article “Eisenhower and the origins of Unified Command” in the *Joint Force Quarterly*, autumn-winter 1999-2000, provides a useful account of how joint operations developed and how the military leadership of that time saw the need to develop a unity of command across multiple force structures. The importance of this article is that it provides a better understanding of how the joint C2 concepts evolved and how the personalities of those who fought World War II thought about the legal and policy underpinnings of joint C2.

James Locher provides an excellent description of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and explains how and why the key changes that are with us today came about. His article in the autumn 1996 edition of *Joint Force Quarterly* provides a clear understanding of why Congress determined it was important that the combatant commander retain combatant command authority over those assigned under him in most circumstances. This has a significant effect on Special Forces in-theater who are directly under a theater special operations command, considered a subunified command under the unified command.

The doctrine and critiques outline above provides the basis for understanding the current methods of SF-convention force C2. Special Forces require a responsive C2 structure that provides unified action that will support a unified effort. Various organizational structures may be formed to C2 Special Forces. The optimal relationship of SF and conventional forces depends upon the specific objectives and operational environments.

Literature on the Historical Perspective

Alfred Paddock's *US Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* and Ian Padden's *US Army Special Forces* provide an earlier account of the founding organizations of Special Forces and their initial problems of acceptance by the conventional forces. They give accounts of elite type forces in World War II and Burma that were disbanded once the need was not considered relevant. Susan Marquis' book, *Unconventional Warfare*, presents the acceptance at the political level, under John F. Kennedy, for the elite type forces to conduct insurgency, subversion and sabotage, like operations. She discusses the

problems associated with poor integration between special operations and conventional forces.

The book, *The Army and Vietnam*, by Andrew Krepinevich, delivers an account of the SF and conventional C2 disconnect under an insurgent like environment. It presents a look at conventional forces that are conducting the same type missions and yet have no unity of effort. The integrated activities between SF and conventional in Vietnam were more along the lines of direct liaison authority and handshake support rather than a formal relationship.

Kenneth Jones, the author of the book, *The Enemy Within, Casting out Panama's Demon*, writes an historical account of the military units and commanders who conducted Operations Just Cause. The United States Special Operations Command *History 15th Anniversary* explains the integration of SF and conventional forces during Operation Just Cause, and outlines the importance of the commanders at the Joint Task Force and Joint Special Operations Task Force level. These commanders all had some type of Special Forces background that assisted the integration and C2 relationships.

The *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, a 1992 final report to Congress, details the missions and C2 of Special Forces during Operation Desert Storm in Iraq. This is a case study that outlines the coalition support team functions and how it supported the conventional elements. It describes the positive operations that Special Forces provided as coalition support teams and the negative lessons learned by the SF teams when they lacked the knowledge needed to support conventional mechanized operations.

The article "A CINC's Perspective," by Joseph Hoar, *Joint Force Quarterly*, autumn 1993 edition, and the "Critical Analysis on the Defeat of Task Force Ranger," by

Major Clifford Day, provide a look at the complexities of the command and control during Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. Both literature works explain the difficulties confronted by having three separate command and controls of Special Forces and conventional forces. They provide insight into the lack of integration of conventional, Special Forces and coalition forces and how this relationship was a factor in the demise of operations in Somalia.

The case study, *A Concise History of the US Army in Operation Uphold Democracy*, by Walter Kretchik, Robert Baumann, and John Fishel, provides the problems with command and control and integration of Special Forces and the conventional forces in Haiti. This book supports the facts that a decentralized command and control often causes confusion and a lack of unity of effort. Robert Shaw's article, "Integrating Conventional and Special Operations Forces," presents the negative tone of the soldiers' sentiments during operations in Haiti. He explains that the lack of coordination and integration of SF and conventional forces caused frustrations that could have been countered through proper relationships.

A monograph, "Special Forces Integration with Multinational Division-North in Bosnia-Herzegovina," by LTC Michael Findlay, discusses the positive and negative outcomes of command and control during Bulkan Operations. He explains the changing relationships and how the conventional commanders felt a mistrust of the Special Forces teams, due to the lack of control they had on those elements operating in their areas.

Literature that Describes Operation in Afghanistan

The New York Times and *Washington Post* articles are the best account of activities that initially took place following the events of 11 September 2001. The *Special*

Warfare Magazine, published by the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, has numerous articles on the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom. Dr. Richard Kiper, a historian at Fort Leavenworth, provides little feedback on problems that might have occurred during the initial phases, but gives an historical account with names and places that could support additional research. Johann Price, in a web site article, provides a detailed account of the chain of command from the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom to 1 June 2002. *The Hunt for Bin Laden Task Force Dagger* by Robin Moore provides a good historical account at the operational and tactical levels. Mr. Moore's book is adventurous and can be relied on for referencing names and places, although for integration purposes it falls short.

Interviews

The author interviewed key personalities of the joint task force and the joint special operations task force who were either commanders or staff officers in Afghanistan from December 2001 to July 2003. The interview questions were related to the position or responsibility of the interviewees. Due to the recentness of operations being conducted in Afghanistan, the interviews provide case study materials that are not presently in published books. The questions asked to all of the interviewees were related to command and control and joint doctrine. (See Appendix A for questions to interviewees.)

The following is a list of those who were interviewed and their position and the dates in those positions:

LTG Dan McNeill, Joint Task Force 180 (Commander), June 2002 to July 2003
COL Joseph Celeski, Joint Special Operations Task Force Afghanistan (Commander),
July 2002- October 2003
LTC Robert Billard, Joint Special Operations Task Force Afghanistan (Operations
Officer), July 2002- August 2003

MAJ Harrison Gilliam, Task Force Dagger, Joint Special Operations North (Current Operations Officer), October 2001-October 2002

The key points that were made by the following interviewees were:

LTG McNeill provided the strategic and operational command and control data of this case study. LTG McNeill, with the combatant commander's approval, saw the need to have all Special Forces under his direct command. LTG McNeill discussed the importance of unity of command and unity of effort, in order to prioritize the resources and efforts of all forces in Afghanistan. He explained that in situations requiring quick responses to actionable intelligence there needed to be a responsive C2 structure. When asked the question about his staff's knowledge in Special Forces capabilities, he stated that his staff had to learn through trial and error the correct utilization of SF.

COL Celeski agreed with LTG McNeill's beliefs on the command and control of Special Forces in Afghanistan. He discussed how the fog of war is often caused by multiple command and control nodes that do not synchronize their efforts. COL Celeski discussed how the present command and control structure in Afghanistan follows the joint doctrine. He explained that the legal aspects of Title 10 provide the right for the combatant commander to task organize as he determines appropriate under specific situations.

LTC Billard provided a different insight explaining that, due to the lack of knowledge in capabilities of Special Forces, the Joint Task Force 180 Staff was more of a hindrance when attempting to conduct operations and integration. He felt that, at times, the Special Forces elements were being incorrectly utilized. He stated that doctrine was too ambiguous and provided little guidelines to the use of Special Forces.

MAJ Gilliam was present during the initial operations in Afghanistan and was able to provide insight as of the effects of removing command and control from under the Theater Special Operations Command to the Joint Task Force 180. From the tactical level, Major Gilliam felt that the command and control was better under the Joint Task Force 180 lineage. He did not think that the Theater Special Operations Command had situational understanding or awareness of the battlefield from their headquarters in Qatar.

The literary review of historical case studies contributes to this thesis by providing a base by which to judge success. All of the events of the past have had either a positive or negative outcome and all had some type of command and control structure. By comparing the key command and control elements that ensured the success of past operations, we can provide criteria to measure the success of command and control in Afghanistan, and can conclude with the optimum C2 structure when integrating Special Forces and conventional forces.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL STUDIES

Thus those unable to understand the dangers inherent in employing troops are equally unable to understand the advantageous ways of doing so.

Sun Tzu

In order to provide background on the integration of Special Forces and conventional units, this chapter focuses on operations where these forces were integrated prior to Operation Enduring Freedom. The explicit concern with integration of the SF capabilities with the conventional force are somewhat new, even though the techniques used for integrating conventional and unconventional warfare have been around for a long time. This type of fighting was not considered “fair” in the past. Many third “freedom fighters,” adopted this approach of fighting. If used correctly, a smaller, poorly equipped force could use this way of unconventional fighting to defeat a superior power. This chapter begins with Vietnam, although many others, such as Wellington’s operations with conventional British Army in coordination with Spanish Guerrillas against French forces in the Peninsular War of 1808-1813, Office of Strategic Services in World War II, Kachin Rangers in Burma, and Jedburghs in Europe, are all examples of unconventional warfare forces in concert with conventional forces.

After the completion of every major combat operation from World War II to Vietnam, the special operations community was reduced in manning and resources. The major services and Army branches were competing for money. The need to maintain an unconventional capability was not considered the priority. The very appearance of Special Forces has contributed to this separation. Variations in issue equipment and

uniforms for Special Forces teams reinforced the “we-they” problem. Often individual wore what they thought was operationally necessary. This sometimes caused disputes between conventional forces and Special Forces, and still does today.

In the mid-1950s, Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg were considered out of control and lacking uniformity. Prior to 1956, the Special Forces teams adopted a green beret as their headgear. Although, this was not a recognized headgear in the Army, the Special Forces teams would show their contempt for uniformity by wearing the beret during field exercises. GEN Paul Adams, Commander of Fort Bragg in 1956, prohibited the wearing of the green beret on Fort Bragg and made it a court-martial offense. In 1961, when John F. Kennedy visited Fort Bragg, the Special Forces wore their green berets, and upon Kennedy’s return to Washington, D.C., he mandated that the green beret would be the official headgear for Special Forces (Pushies 2001, 24). This distinction became more than a symbolic separation of Special Forces and conventional forces.

Although the United States Army gained some experience in conventional-Special Forces integration in World War II and Korea, it failed to develop it further before the Vietnam War. The Vietnam conflict was perceived by General of the Army Omar Bradley, “as the wrong war at the wrong time and in the wrong place” (Krepinevich 1986, 4). Nevertheless, within the decade after the French had been driven out of Vietnam by Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh, the US began its support of South Vietnam. The initial effort began as a low-level advisory to South Vietnam’s Army (ARVN), but the doctrine US troops were using reflected what they had learned during World War II.

It was generally accepted in America's high military command and staff circles that there was nothing unique about Ho Chi Minh's war. As far as most of the senior leaders were concerned, the basic training, leadership, organizational principles, tactics, and strategy that had won America's wars in the past would be more than adequate for Indochina. Both special warfare and Special Forces were terms that raised many hackles among the conventional regulars. (Boykin 1991)

The special operation forces were sent into Laos as early as 1959 to train soldiers of the Royal Lao Army (Pushies 2001, 24). The South Vietnamese Army did not have a strong officer or noncommissioned officer corp. This was mostly due to the French officers and noncommissioned officers who were the key leaders in the Vietnamese Army. The US Special Forces were given the task of building a stronger South Vietnamese Army through mobile training teams (Pushies 2001, 29). One of the leading advocates for this was President John F. Kennedy. In 1961, Kennedy made his commitment to expand support of the South Vietnamese apparent, by stating:

I am directing the Secretary of Defense to expand rapidly and substantially, in cooperation with Allies, the orientation of existing forces for the conduct on non-nuclear war, paramilitary operations and sub-limited or unconventional wars. In addition, our Special Forces and unconventional warfare units will be increased and reoriented. Throughout the services new emphasis must be placed on the special skills and languages which are required to work with local populations. (Kennedy 1961)

Once the US Special Forces started training the South Vietnamese Army, it became apparent to Ho Chi Minh that he would be required to react. The insurgent activities were initiated from North Vietnam into the South in order to destabilize the South Vietnamese government. The Special Forces received a new mission with the insurgent activities from the North. The insurgent recruitment from the North was focusing on recruiting the Montagnards tribes who were the poorest and most austere in South Vietnam. The Special Forces were sent out to live with the Montagnards to

overcome the North Vietnamese recruitment and to sway their support for the South Vietnamese efforts (Simpson 1983, 100).

There were two parallel plans for US support of Vietnam. The first was to help train and equip the South Vietnamese Army to fight their own war utilizing the Special Forces and unconventional means. The second was to support the South Vietnamese with our troops fighting against the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The decision would be to send conventional forces to fight the NVA using conventional techniques while the Special Forces utilized unconventional techniques to support the counterinsurgency and clandestine operations. There was very little, if any, integration between Special Forces and conventional forces during the Vietnam War. There were situations where the conventional and Special Forces found themselves fighting side by side, but at the tactical level there was not unity of command (Padden 1985, 34).

The outcome of Vietnam had a vastly different effect on the Special Forces than it did on the conventional forces. The war was viewed as a mistake and often portrayed in movies with conventional forces lacking discipline or defeated in most battles. The movie *Platoon* portrayed the conventional forces as dope-smoking dropouts who were there to fight a no-win war. In contrast, the movie, *Green Berets*, the main character played by John Wayne, brought the elite soldiers' lives to the screen. John Wayne was a commander of elite soldiers who were nothing but successful. The song, *The Green Beret* by SGT Barry Sadler, was a hit on the top music charts. The first Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam was CPT Roger Donlon earned in his heroic battle in the defense of a Special Forces camp named Nam Dong (Simpson 1983, 95).

The first extensive review of the command and control and resources of special operations was a result of the Holloway Commission. This commission was formed after the failed attempt to rescue hostages in Iran, called Desert One (Pushies 2001, 40-41). The commission's work led to the establishment of the 1st Special Operations Command. Today, this headquarters is recognized as the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and is charged with the duties of supporting the special operations communities' needs in resources, training, and assigning forces to regional combatant commands. Its importance lies in the fact that it is a separate command, which was established to prepare special operators of the Navy, Army, and Air Force for the needs of the different combatant commanders (*USSOCOM History* 2002, 13).

The first test of the preparedness of special operation forces under USSOCOM was the invasion of Panama. The mission was to capture the corrupt dictator, Manuel Noriega. In order to do this, forces would be required to eliminate Noriega's strength, the Panama Defense Force (PDF) (*USSOCOM History* 2002, 22). The invasion commander was LTG Carl W. Stiner and the Joint Special Operation Task Force Commander (JSOTF) was MG Wayne A. Downing. Both commanders had Special Forces backgrounds and would later become commanders of the USSOCOM. Their cooperation produced two good examples of successful SOF-Conventional integration. The first example was the 4th Battalion 6th Infantry Mechanized "Task Force Gator" (TF Gator) that supported the Special Forces in the capture and destruction of the Comandancia (the headquarters of the PDF). Task Force Gator was initially the blocking force and then participated in the assault. TF Gator received some friendly fratricides, but this was not attributed to problems with SF-Conventional C2. TF Gator rescued personnel from one of

the direct action assault helicopters shot down in the middle of hostile PDF (*USSOCOM History* 2002, 23).

The other example was the integration of the Rangers (TF Red) and the 82nd Airborne in capturing the Tocumen airport. The Rangers captured the airport and supported a flawless landing of the 82nd Airborne Division. In the end, Noriega was captured and detained by the US, and the American hostages who were being held across from the Comandancia were freed (SOCOM 2002, 22-32).

Panama was a small contingency compared to the operation to counter the invasion of Kuwait. This conflict was the first to really test the service integration and command authorities demanded by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. The Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment gave more power to the combatant commander and took power away from the service chiefs. This legislation also created United States Special Operations Command. It facilitated the changes in command relationships giving more authority to the sub-unified commands. This was important for special operating forces since the act gave the combatant commander increased authority to task organize forces assigned to his region (The Final Report to Congress 1992, XXV).

Iraq forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. The Special Forces under the direction of Special Operations Command CENTCOM (SOCCENT), pre-staged in Saudi Arabia. Special Forces elements were given multiple missions in support of the grand scheme (Final Report to Congress 1992, 526-527). The two primary roles Special Forces would be tasked were the coalition support teams (CST) and special reconnaissance (The Final Report to Congress 1992, 528, 541). The coalition support teams provided the

liaison between the coalition units and American forces. These teams were seen as essential to the success of maneuvering the multinational forces from Saudi Arabia to Kuwait City. The one complaint that the US conventional forces had about the CSTs, was the lack of knowledge Special Forces commanders had in maneuvering a mechanized force (The Final Report to Congress 1992, 541). GEN Schwarzkopf complimented the special reconnaissance teams on their ability to provide situational awareness (The Final Report to Congress 1992, 529). The *Final Report to Congress* did not discuss any problems between Special Forces and conventional C2 in Desert Storm. The Special Forces fell directly under a Special Forces headquarters, Special Operations Command Centcom (SOCCENT) (The Final Report to Congress 1992, 541). Desert Storm was the only mission in the area of operation, and whatever CENTCOM needed from Special Forces, they got.

He who understands how to use both large and small forces will be victorious. (Sun Tzu 1971)

Special Forces had proven that they could support a major conventional fight. They had also proven in Panama, that with the right mix of conventional and SOF they could topple a dictator. The next test would not be so positive.

In 1991, the government of Somalia was facing a civil war. There was extreme unrest among the fighting clans competing for the control of Somalia. The losers in all of this strife were the common people who were facing starvation. The United Nations established a Chapter VI, Peacekeeping Mission,” to assist in the deliverance of humanitarian aid. The warlords of the different clans demanded that all food and aid go through them. The UN actions to supply the population directly caused friction with the warlords. This threatened the power of Mohammad Farah Aidid. He was the former chief

of staff and leader of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) (Day 1997, 3). The SNA was the strongest and most well equipped of the clans. President Clinton established Operation Restore Hope to address the problems that UNOSOM I was having delivering aid. Operation Restore Hope was perceived as a success. The hostilities were curtailed and the humanitarian aid was being distributed to the people (SOCOM History 2002, 49). With the success of Restore Hope the United Nations established UNOSOM II. However, on 5 June 1993 Aidid's forces ambushed and killed 24 Pakistani soldiers, an action that would eventually lead to open hostilities with US forces.

At the onset of UNISOM II, there were three chains of command in Somalia: first, the UN peacekeeping force under the leadership of LTG Cevik Bier; second, US Forces in Somalia were under MG Thomas Montgomery; and third, the joint special operations forces were under MG William Garrison. The joint special operations task force was established on 22 August 1993 when the Secretary of Defense Les Aspen gave orders to launch joint special operations task force (Task Force Ranger) (*SOCOM History* 2002, 49). Under the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the unified commander was able to task organize forces as he deemed necessary, therefore, Task Force Ranger remained under the direct control of GEN Joseph Hoar, the CENTCOM Commander. This was a design for disaster, multiple elements fighting the same fight, and each command with different goals. There was little, if any, integration between Special Forces and conventional forces. The US had been denied armor to support the operations in Somalia. The Malaysians would provide quick reactionary forces with their armored personnel carriers. The three separate command elements had coordinated the integration although they had

not rehearsed with one another due to their worries of mission compromise (Day 1997, 36-37).

On 3 October 1993, Task Force Ranger, in an incident now known as “Blackhawk Down,” attempted an attack on Aidid’s hideout. The Rangers were met with hostile crowds and as the mission continued, the situation deteriorated. Two helicopters were severely damaged by enemy ground fire. One went down and the other returned to its base. The Malaysian quick reactionary forces were not prepared to assist. In an after action report, blame would be placed on the administration for not deploying armor for the joint task force. The armor, if provided, would have been placed under MG Montgomery the US Forces Commander Somalia. Unless TF Ranger was willing to take the risk of compromise, any armor vehicles in country would probably be in the same state of preparedness as the Malaysian’s armor. TF Ranger loses in the Somalia contingency were 17 killed and 106 wounded (*SOCOM History* 2002, 52).

On 30 September 1991, when the President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled after a coup, the US armed forces were charged by the administration to begin planning for an invasion of Haiti. The original plan (OPLAN 2370), a well-integrated effort, was to be conducted primarily by the elements of XVIII Airborne Corps, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), 82nd Airborne Division, and 3rd Special Forces Group. The planners ensured that capabilities of the various elements matched the targets and tasks assigned. The 82nd Abn Division was tasked for larger targets, and the special operation forces would be tasked for more precise targets (Kretchik, Baumann, and Fishel, 1998, 50).

On 2 June 1994, US Atlantic Command (USACOM) notified the XVIII Airborne Corps to begin a new plan (OPLAN 2380) whereby forces would conduct a permissive entry to conduct a stability operation. OPLAN 2380 was a much longer operation; therefore, FORSCOM was concerned about the 82nd Airborne Division being committed over a long period. The FORSCOM solution was to have the 10th Mountain Division orchestrate OPLAN 2380. There were now two separate plans. Within time, USACOM requested that the two plans be merged into one and then later requested that some US Army forces be replaced by Marines. As the crisis developed former President Carter was appointed by President Clinton to go to Haiti and negotiate a peaceful solution. This caused more confusion among the task force commanders and planners (Kretchik, Baumann, and Fishel 1998, 56).

Former President Carter was able to negotiate an unopposed entry and US military forces immediately flowed into Haiti on 19 September 1994. This resulted in the creation of a fourth plan. There was no organized militarily significant force on the ground. This placed coalition forces in an ambiguous situation. The Special Forces continued their missions to control remote areas of Haiti while conventional forces deployed to the major cities. The 10th Mountain Division units and the Special Forces teams around Port-au-Prince were poorly coordinated. The Special Forces considered the conventional areas of operations as the “Kevlar Zone,” so named because of requirement to wear body armor and helmets. Special Forces tended to stay away from their conventional counterparts to prevent harassment. The 10th Mountain Division troops would often encounter Special Forces teams in remote areas, not realizing they were there and unaware of the Special Forces mission (Shaw 1997, 5). In conclusion, what began

out as a well-planned integrated operation turned out to be an ad hoc mission conducted by separate entities that had not planned, trained, or rehearsed together. If there had to be a description of Special Forces and conventional force integration in Haiti, it would have to be characterized as avoidance of one another.

Even as the operation in Haiti continued, American attention was diverted by the situation in Bosnia. There were over one million displaced persons, as well as hundreds of thousands dead from interethnic warfare. As the UN Chapter VI, “Peacekeeping Mission,” faltered, a diplomatic effort resulted in the Dayton Accords. The administration sent forces in to assist the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR). To support the conventional effort, a combined joint special operation task force was located in Sarajevo. Their mission was to command the joint commission observer (JCO) teams made up of US Army Special Forces soldiers.

In 2000 the American Multi-National Division North commanded by MG Walter Sharp had tactical control (TACON) over a SF company headquarters that commanded six Special Forces teams. The teams were OPCON to the JSOTF and ADCON to the company headquarters who worked directly for the division. The doctrinal set up was aligned with JPs in terms of integrating Special Forces through the SOCCE (Company Headquarters) to the conventional headquarters. The operational detachments remained OPCON to the JSOTF for tasking (Findlay 1998, 10-11).

To a degree, the same problem that had existed in Haiti occurred in Bosnia. The conventional and Special Forces did not understand one another’s culture and operating procedures. The Special Forces teams were often harassed by the conventional forces for their appearance and the Special Forces teams often exhibited a holier “than thou

attitude” (Findlay 2000, 16). There were mutual misperceptions by both forces. However, both were forced to work together and slowly evolved a workable C2 solution. In the end the JCOs were given great praise by the Multi-National Division North Commander and were considered a great asset in the collection of critical intelligence. The Special Forces continued to provide this capability until 16 May 2001 (Sater 2001, 1).

The author served as the SOCCE commander in Bosnia from January to May 2001 and was quoted in the *Stars and Stripes*. “Their [Special Forces Teams] talents and resources are more urgently needed elsewhere in a busy world” (Anderson 2001, 2-3). If I had only known what was in store for me and the Special Forces community in Afghanistan in days and months following 11 September 2001.

CHAPTER 4

AFGHANISTAN

On 15 September 2001, the United States Senate authorized the President of the United States to use whatever forces necessary to respond to those responsible for the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. During a news interview, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld pointed out some difficulties of determining targets in Afghanistan, requiring a different type of unconventional warfare, and the possible use of small elements of commandos (Schmitt 2001, 1). On 20 September 2001, the Army Special Forces Command from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, confirmed that they had received deployment orders, but would not reveal the number of forces involved. As the world watched and questioned the possibilities of retaliation, the Commander of Central Command requested Special Forces planners to look at different methods by which Special Forces elements could provide support to combat terrorists (Schmitt 2001, 1). On 7 October 2001, the President of the United States, George W. Bush, addressed the nation, “On my orders the United States military has begun strikes against Al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan” (*New York Times*, 8 October 2001 excerpt on the president’s speech). By early October 2001, elements of the 5th Special Forces Group were deploying to Karshi Kanabad (K2), Uzbekistan. K2 would be the initial staging area for Special Forces elements for deployment into northern Afghanistan.

The initial stages of the war in Afghanistan were fought by integrated Special Forces and Air Force elements, which supported the Northern Alliance in defeating the

Taliban and Al-Qaida. The Northern Alliance was a band of warlords in Afghanistan. Robin Moore, in his book *The Hunt for Bin Laden*, compares the Northern Alliance to the Montagnards of Vietnam. The Northern Alliance was Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and other Dari-speaking tribes. They were considered the underdogs, and controlled only ten percent of the landmass of Afghanistan (Moore 2003, 17). The Al-Qaida was a mixture of fanatic Pakistanis, Chechens, Egyptians, and other Arabs who were not welcomed by the native Afghans. The Taliban was the ruling political party that espoused in the strictest beliefs of Islam. The Al-Qaida used the Taliban's ideological fervor to support their holy war, "Jihad." Afghanistan had never been entirely controlled by a foreign power before. The British and the Russians both attempted, but failed to gain a strategic hold in Afghanistan.

Through the Northern Alliance, Special Forces with the assistance of the Air Force elements were able to gain a foothold in northern Afghanistan and drive the Taliban and Al-Qaida forces into the capital of Afghanistan (Kabul). It did not take long for the Special Forces and Northern Alliance forces to gain the advantage. The in-theater commander of Special Forces was the CENTCOM Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command (CFSOCC) led by RADM Albert M. Calland III. RADM Calland, special operations command CENTCOM (SOCCENT) commander, reported directly to GEN Tommy Franks, the CENTCOM Commander. RADM Calland established two joint special operation task forces (JSOTF), which separated north and south Afghanistan. The JSOTF in the north was commanded by COL John Mulholland and was formed around the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). COL Mulholland's JSOTF was called Task Force Dagger and provided training and equipment for the Northern Alliance to fight the

Taliban and Al Qaida forces. The JSOTF in the south was formed around a SEAL detachment. JSOTF south was nicknamed Task Force Sword. Task Force Sword was given the mission to conduct operations against sensitive sites, for example terrorist camps, and areas in which Bin Laden might be hiding. Within three months of the initial bombing raids, Al-Qaida forces had displaced into the mountains northeast of the capital city, Kabul.

Conventional forces were then introduced into the area of operations that call for a change in the task organizations and methods of operations. The coalition force land component command (CFLCC) was established in Doha, Kuwait under the command of LTG Mikolashek. The CFLCC was established in November 2001, to coordinate, control, and synchronize all land operations in Afghanistan, to include special operation missions and priorities. The CFLCC and the CFSOCC were OPCON to the CENTCOM Commander GEN Franks (Price 2002, 1-3). (See figure 1 for command relationships.)

Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan was an old airbase previously used by the Russians and now was used by the American forces for the location of their CFLCC and CJSOTF headquarters. Bagram was a strategic location halfway between the northern and southern borders of Afghanistan, and forty-five minutes north of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. The first headquarters, established in Bagram on 26 February 2002, was the Combined Task Force 58 composed of three Marine Expeditionary Units. A small headquarters element from JSOTF-North collocated with the Marine Expeditionary Unit. The second headquarters to arrive in Bagram was the 10th Mountain Division. In March 2002, the theater special operations command established a central JSOTF at Bagram Base adjacent to the conventional force headquarters. The 10th Mountain Division under MG

Hagenbeck assumed the responsibilities of the Coalition Force Land Component Forward (CFLCC-FWD).

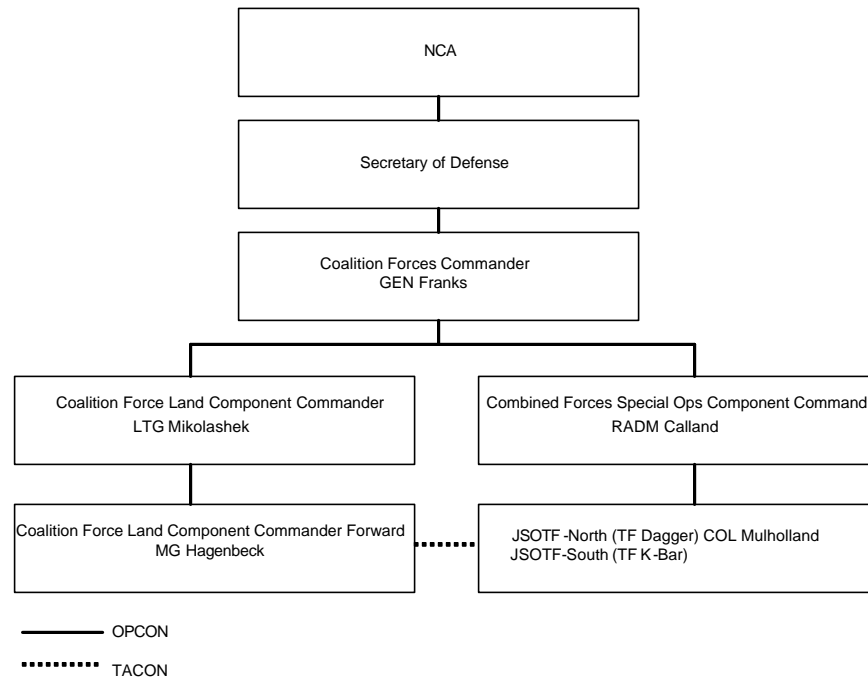


Figure 1. Operation Enduring Freedom C2 prior to March 2002

The introduction of CFLCC-FWD was the first measure taken by GEN Franks to prepare conventional forces for combat operations. During a press briefing on 4 March 2002, GEN Franks said, “We will find for a variety of reasons, that we may be better by the introduction of US infantry forces” (USCENTCOM Press Briefing 2002, 3). This briefing discussed the first combined effort during Operation Anaconda in March 2002. Operation Anaconda was commanded by CFLCC-FWD and supported through a TACON relationship by the Special Forces elements who were conducting coalition support, direct action, and special reconnaissance missions.

GEN Tommy Franks, as the coalition force commander and combatant commander chose to keep the coalition force special operations command directly under his control. This command relationship was very similar to the command relationship in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia. The Special Forces elements chain of command went from the JSOTF directly to the CENTCOM Commander. (See Figure 1)

In March 2002, a JSOTF formed around the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) commanded by COL Mark Phelan replaced the JSOTF-North headquarters element in Bagram. This JSOTF would become Joint Special Operation Task Force Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A). From March 2002 to May 2002 the JSOTF-North and JSOTF-South were replaced with Special Forces battalions assigned to 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne). The 10th Mountain Division under MG Hagenbeck would be designated Coalition Joint Task Force Mountain (CJTF-Mountain). CJSOTF-A would remain OPCON to the theater special operations command (SOCCENT) and was TACON to the CJTF-Mountain. The preponderance of forces in Afghanistan was now conventional forces under CJTF-Mountain. Special Forces were now in more of a supporting role.

The relationship between CJSOTF-A and CJTF-Mountain was built around the personal relationship between COL Phelan and MG Hagenbeck. The two commanders had worked together in the past and felt very comfortable with the integration of their forces. This provided a comfortable setting whereby the staff worked out the details of the tactical command and control relationships of subordinate units. The subordinates would alternate between supported and supporting, normally making the supporting force TACON to the supported force depending on the type of operations conducted.

In June 2002, Combined Joint Task Force 180 (Afghanistan) was built around the XVIII Corp's staff and under the command of LTG Dan K. McNeill who assumed responsibility for all operations in Afghanistan. The CJSOTF-A became OPCON to the Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180). (See figure 2.) Doctrinally, the theater special operations command can establish a separate JSOTF to act in their absence. "Establishment of a JSOTF is appropriate when Special Forces command and control requirements exceed the capabilities of the theater special operations command staff. A JSOTF is normally formed around elements from the theater special operations command or an existing Special Forces unit with augmentation from other service special operation forces. A theater special operations command may form a JSOTF and then pass tactical control (TACON) to a service or functional component requiring special operations support"(JP 3-05, III 4). This relationship, outlined in the JP, was the initial command and control CJTF-Mountain had with CCJSOTF-A. The relationship between CJTF-180 and CJSOTF-A was different when placing the CCJSOTF-A OPCON to the JTF. This gave the CJTF-180 commander the ability to mission and task organize Special Forces under his control.

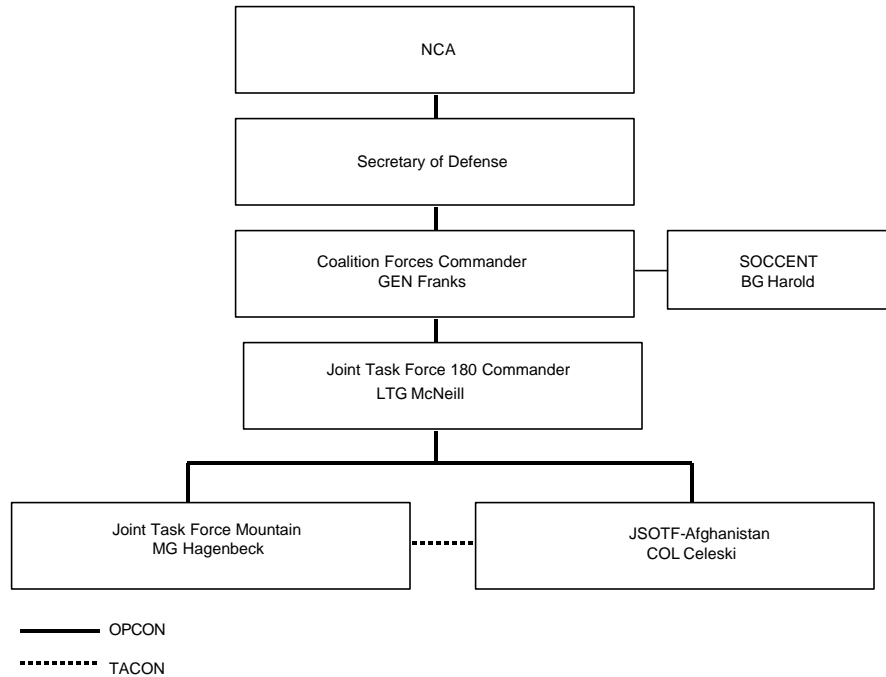


Figure 2. Command and Control after March 2002

Prior to assuming command of all forces in Afghanistan, LTG McNeill requested of GEN Franks, CENTCOM Commander, that all Special Forces minus the National strategic level special operation forces, be placed under his control. This would require SOCCENT, the theater special operations command (TSOC), to be OPCON to the joint task force in country. The TSOC is the combatant commander's advisor and a portion of that headquarters could be forward deployed as a nucleus to a JSOTF, but would normally remain directly under the control of the combatant commander. GEN Franks accepted the idea that LTG McNeill should have Special Forces under his control in order to ensure unity of effort (LTG McNeill Interview); however, it would be a tailored JSOTF not SOCCENT. Even though at this time, SOCCENT was headquartered in Qatar

and was only in communication with CJSOTF-A by teleconference LTG McNeill still felt he could not have unity of command.

During this time period, SOCCENT received word that they were to begin detailed planning for the invasion of Iraq. SOCCENT decided with pressure from GEN Franks, to give OPCON of special operation forces and CCJSOTF-A directly to the joint task force commander on the ground. GEN Franks, under Goldwater-Nichols, was using his authority to task organize as he saw necessary to accomplish the mission.

Paraphrasing GEN McNeill in his interview, the SOCCENT was needed for planning purposes, and would require all their staff to support the planning for a war in Iraq. The CJSOTF-A Commander, who was now COL Joseph Celeski, was placed in the role of advising the joint task force commander in utilizing Special Forces in Afghanistan. In theory, COL Celeski was the joint force special operations command and control (JFSOCC) element commander, normally the job of the theater special operations commands.

The JFSOCC is normally reserved for the TSOC Commander due to experience with joint and coalition Special Forces. COL Celeski was unique among SF group commanders in terms of experience. He had been the operations officer of the joint special operations task force in Somalia and had been the commander to the joint special operations task force in Bosnia.

GEN McNeill stated that, “actionable intelligence would require actionable actions, and would be very hard if the request had to go through multiple channels when requiring Special Force” (LTG McNeill Interview). To request Special Forces would require going through lengthy staffing procedures that would eventually be placed before

the TSOC Commander, who at this time, was located in the United States. The CJSOTF-A headquarters was located one hundred meters from the CJTF-180 headquarters. COL Celeski, the CJSOTF-A Commander, was within walking distance and could discuss any Special Forces issues directly with LTG McNeill. The CJSOTF-A staff and commander were required to participate on a daily basis in all joint-planning groups at the CJTF-180 headquarters. When actionable intelligence became available, the JSOTF and JTF received and analyzed the intelligence simultaneously. Prior to the JSOTF becoming OPCON to the JTF, the request for tasking a Special Forces battalion or Special Forces operational detachment could take twenty-four to forty-eight hours and this time delay to react to actionable intelligence window of availability of the target caused great frustration on behalf of the element conducting the mission. The approval process would take so long that the subordinates conducting the operation would often not know they had approval until a few hours prior to lifting off for their mission. After the CJSOTF-A became OPCON to the JTF, the tasked unit conducting the mission would submit a concept of operations (CONOP) and would be given an approval to execute within an hour or two of the JSOTF receiving their CONOP. This also allowed the staffs of the JSOTF and JTF to discuss any issues that were deemed as a risk and submit the issues directly to the element conducting the mission. When considering time restraints, the JSOTF being OPCON to the JTF was a plus.

From June to October 2002, the CJSOTF-A conducted numerous missions with the CJTF-Mountain and later with the CJTF-82nd, which was built around the 82nd Airborne Division. The Special Forces battalions would conduct planning with the conventional brigades in their sector. The Special Forces companies assumed the mission

of special operations command and control element (SOCCE). The SOCCE would imbed itself with a conventional battalion tactical operation center during missions that were in the same area of operations of their Special Forces teams. The Special Forces teams also conducted unilateral special reconnaissance in support of the overall effort. The Special Forces teams would also serve as liaison teams, acting as conduits between the Afghan military forces and the conventional forces. The key to success was often the coordination completed prior to the operations.

The mistakes made in Somalia and Haiti was eliminated in Afghanistan by ensuring that the conventional forces understood the primary role of the Special Forces teams on the ground. The Special Forces teams were given instructions to learn how to effectively work with conventional forces without causing frictions.

Paraphrasing COL Celeski, name tags say US Army not US SOF. Special Forces is a Army tool not just a national or joint tool (COL Celeski Interview year).

During Operation Mountain Sweep, the conventional forces were ridiculed in the magazine *Newsweek* for not understanding the customs of the people in the area of operation. This one incident not only harmed rapport in the area in which the operations were conducted but also was detrimental to rapport between the Special Forces and conventional forces. For succeeding missions, the company commander gave cultural awareness classes to the conventional company prior to their air assault operations. The result was enhanced integration between the Special Forces and the conventional forces. The Special Forces on the ground established a better understanding between the conventional company and the local populace in the area of the operation. The key to

integration at the tactical level had been broken. It was built around doctrine, habitual relationships, interpersonal relationship skills, and unity of effort.

The companies conducting SOCCE operations with the conventional battalions were TACON to the conventional battalion commanders. The conventional battalion commanders were very open-minded to what the SOCCE Commander would suggest as a course of action before and during the operations. The relationships became stronger every day through the continual integration of forces.

When CJTF-82 arrived in theater, their staff wanted the geographical control measures to be clearly defined. COL Celeski explained during the interview that the Special Forces did not have boundaries, but were more like an aircraft flying over your area of operations. You would never ask for an airplane supporting a mission to be OPCON to the conventional force on the ground. The same idea applied to the Special Forces teams. The teams belonged to the Special Forces companies and battalions which were all OPCON to the CJSOTF-A. The company could be TACON to a conventional battalion during those operations that needed Special Forces support, but would not remain TACON to the battalion after the specific mission was completed. The TACON of a company to a conventional force and the Special Forces teams remaining OPCON to the JSOTF follows doctrine of JP 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations*. This was the same relationship that had existed between the SOCCE and the Multi-National Force in Bosnia. Once CJTF-82 experienced this working relationship, the notion of Special Forces teams being OPCON to conventional battalions was dismissed. The JSOTF staff perceived the lack of knowledge by the conventional staff in joint and special operations

doctrine caused most of the problems between the staffs of the CJTF-82 and the CJSOTF-A.

The Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) provides instruction on C2 doctrine. According to the JSOU, increasingly supported and supporting relationships are preferred when aligning conventional and Special Forces (Newton March 2004). Under current doctrine, the supporting and supported relationships require those requesting the special operation capabilities to outline their requirements in terms of mission and duration. Although this does not seem very complicated, it is still not readily accepted by conventional force commanders who prefer OPCON and TACON (LTC Billard interview). OPCON and TACON appear to be more clearly understood and accepted terms. OPCON provides the authority to task and reorganize. TACON means only having tasking authority over limited missions. The CJTF-82 preferred to use OPCON and TACON relationships. The joint task force at the corps level was more likely to use supported and supporting. This normally caused problems between the CJSOTF-A and the CJTF-82 because the CJTF-82 perceived the supporting relationship as OPCON. The disputes could often go on for hours, as the two staffs would argue over the definitions of supported and supporting. However, this frustration generally stayed at the staff levels.

When the tactical level units were given the mission of supported and supporting, they would carry out the mission without requesting guidance of terminology. The theory at the JSOTF level was that the conventional and Special Forces tactical elements understood what their mission was and what they needed to do to accomplish the mission. They did not see the need to argue over OPCON and TACON.

The integration of conventional and Special Forces in Afghanistan was similar to that of operations in Panama, and Desert Storm. The only difference was the relationship of the JSOTF and the JTF. The similarities between the above mentioned contingencies operations were clear and resulted in unity of effort, if not unity of command. The roles of integration were well defined. Command and control in Somalia and Haiti were very different due to separate echelons of command. The separation of command caused separation in geographical areas of operations that did not normally overlap. The Special Forces conducted their mission and the conventional conducted theirs. Neither were familiar with the others mission. There should be no surprise that this separation would cause frustration with both conventional and Special Forces.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Order or disorder depends on organization; courage or cowardice on circumstances; strengths or weakness on disposition.

Sun Tzu

The previous chapter points out that as situations changed in Afghanistan so did the command relationships, to facilitate unity of effort. The command and control relationship provided the unity of command and effort required to mass forces to meet the enemy at his disadvantage and provided the economy of force to prevent depletion of resources. The Goldwater-Nichols Act enhanced the combatant commander's ability to task organize in order to support the effort needed to conduct the operations. The combatant commander's staff generates a concept of operations through effects and then determines what capabilities are required to produce those effects. The command and control relationship defines the most effective means by which to ensure unity of effort towards meeting that goal. Unity of command ensures that the joint task force commander responsible to accomplish the mission has all of the capabilities that are required and provides the ability to synchronize and control efforts. Doctrine gives the commanders and staffs the guide by which to unify all of these efforts.

Doctrine is developed from examination of and extrapolation from past combat operations. Doctrine is not meant to constrain a commander's ability to fight, instead it should be perceived as historically based, "best practices," that suggest recommended courses of action. At the same time doctrine must stay flexible to meet the demands of changes.

Words in doctrine, such as “normally,” are used to show that past operations, under the actual conditions of operations, were most commonly met under the guidance given in the JPs. With the ever-changing battlefield in Afghanistan and Iraq, doctrine provides the inexperienced with options, and potential courses of action. Doctrine is also a means by which to unify the guidance to all participants in the joint effort. Joint doctrine should be used by all US Military forces in the current environment. Service and branch doctrine is too restrictive and does not often consider the joint aspects of warfare. The service doctrine, and branch specific tactics, techniques and procedures are less flexible. In order to unify the effort, it is important to unify the guidance by which joint doctrine provides. It is indicative, that joint doctrine is important and is very relevant to our present operations in Afghanistan and Iraq?

The joint doctrinal publications are reviewed every five years unless it is deemed they need to be changed sooner (Sawyer 1996-97, 36-39). These publications pass through multiple layers of assessment before being reviewed by all services and the Joint Staff J-7. This process ensures that all services have the opportunity to provide feedback on the relevance of the information in the JP. This process, keeps joint documents updated with critical changes in doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). Although the JPs are reviewed every five years this does not mean we should continually expect change. For every change we make we must educate our forces. Military academic institutions often lag behind the doctrine and TTPs being learned on the battlefield. By the time publications are rewritten, the situation in the field may be already changing its methods of operations. If we attempt to change doctrine to reflect all lessons learned we risk making doctrine too concise and specific. This process of reviewing JPs every five

years ensures that we do not overload the doctrinal centers that are compiling and validating the changes. When you question the validity of the JPs, it is important to continually remind oneself that it is a guide.

The previous chapter describes different command and control relationships between conventional and Special Forces at the operational and tactical level in Afghanistan. The JSOTF attempts to translate the direction from the operational level and task the battalions to perform the tactical missions that will bring about desired effects at the operational (JSOTF) level. As discussed earlier command relationships can be very frustrating at the operational (JSOTF) level, and this can result in confusion at the tactical (battalion) level. Joint doctrine can be interpreted differently among staffs of different commands. A means to eliminate this confusion would be for the JPs to be more detailed in the specifics of command relationships at the operational level. If the combatant commander creates a joint task force and does not wish to relinquish his special operations advisor to work directly for the joint task force commander, then the theater special operations command should OPCON a joint special operations task force to the joint task force. This can have both positive and negative outcomes. In Afghanistan, it proved to be positive. An Army corps commander had more power to provide support requirements than the theater special operations command.

In interviews both LTG McNeill and COL Celeski felt that the most important principles of war were unity of command and economy of force. These two principles must be applied through command and control relationships. Unity of Command and Economy of Force have proven, through time, to reflect successful and unsuccessful command and control relationships. Unity of Command is; “All forces operate under a

single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose” (JP 3-0 2001). Operations in Somalia were conducted by three different commands. In Somalia, TF Ranger belonged to the CENTCOM Commander who was located in Tampa, Florida. MG Montgomery was responsible for US Forces in Somalia except for Task Force Ranger. The Coalition Forces and the United Nation forces were under the control of LTG Bier. Although Task Force Ranger’s mission was different, the separation of command and control made it very ineffective for coordination of a rescue force as well as the synchronization of resources. The amount of intelligent collection assets and the amount of forces were finite. This would further support the need to have a single commander to ensure that resources are synchronized and prioritized. Without unity of command, it is very difficult if not impossible to apply economy of force.

“Economy of force is the allocation of minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts in order to achieve mass elsewhere at the decisive point and time” (JP 3-0 2001). If the commander does not own the resources then how does he manage the economy of those he does not control? LTG McNeill made this point clear to GEN Franks when he requested that all of the forces in Afghanistan fall under his control. In a simple analogy, it would be the same as having a football team with the quarterback having no control over his receivers, but complete control of his running backs; therefore, he only can plan a ground game. It seems absurd to think that a football team could play that way. This same type of philosophy should also be considered when forming a joint task force team. If the JTF Commander does not have command and control over the forces on the ground then there is no unity of effort. Unity of effort is a joint term that

requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure (JP 3-0 2001). In simple terms, unity of effort is when all forces are focused on accomplishing a central goal.

Unity of effort combines all the capabilities and resources into one to maximize all efforts. A good example is conventional and Special Forces integrated capabilities to enhance their unique skills and combat power to facilitate the destruction of enemy forces. In Afghanistan, Special Forces teams along with Afghan forces could not cordon off a small town but were very suited for searching houses. The conventional forces were not well suited for searching the towns, but were well suited for containing a town to prevent enemy from leaving the objective. This could be done through separate commands but were more effective under one commander. The unity of command provided unity of effort and allowed the commander to economize forces to accomplish secondary efforts. The conventional battalion commander with the Special Forces company commander in his operations center had a better understanding of the entire battlefield. This did not require different command and control relationships but different tactics, techniques and procedures. This begs the question if the problem is command and control relationships or just the acceptance of the most familiar relationships at the tactical level.

The command and control relationships of OPCON, TACON, and Support were really nothing more than semantics at the tactical level. At the operational level the JSOTF and division staffs looked at the meaning to determine tasking authority. OPCON and TACON were preferred by the conventional forces due to their lack of knowledge in

understanding of Support. Support required the duration and task to be defined and placed ownership on the supported rather than the supporting. The conventional forces were not very comfortable in providing the guidance needed under support by definition of the JPs. Under JP 3.05, *Doctrine of Joint Special Operations*, the supported commander has the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting effort. The supported commander should ensure that the supporting commander understands assistance required and the duration of support needed. Once the division staff understood that the Special Forces teams would only be allowed a TACON relationship with conventional forces, there was no need to carry on long discussions in order to define Support.

This thesis narrows the focus to C2 and doctrinal problems that did exist. Through the demands that LTG McNeill made in developing a unified command in Afghanistan, the purpose and efforts became unified through command and control at the operational level. At the tactical level Special Forces and conventional forces were able to integrate by using whatever C2 that the situation demanded. Operations in Afghanistan proved successful once the JTF-180, the JSOTF, and JTF-Mountain used the joint doctrinal guidelines and allowed the flexibility of command and control to be as flexible as the operational environment. To conclude, joint doctrine works well as a guide. When the TSOC is absent in the area of operation the JSOTF should be placed OPCON to the joint task force and at the tactical level the Special Forces should remain OPCON to the JSOTF and TACON to those forces that they support for specific operational needs.

There are other solutions that might be used to solve C2 problems in a joint environment. Three areas that could be researched as separate studies are: educating the

force in joint operations; training as a joint force; and having a continual habitual relationship in peacetime. Education is the basis by which we are to ensure our officers and noncommissioned officers, conventional and SF are capable of working in a joint environment. Presently, our young officers are often forced to work in a joint environment, in most cases, they learn through “on-the-job training.” Company grade officers have no instruction in the different capabilities of joint and SOF forces on the present day battlefield. In Afghanistan, when conventional platoons and companies moved into cities most likely there were Special Forces who were living in these areas and could act as liaisons. For example, the concept of passage of friendly lines does not have to be a linear battlefield. If a conventional platoon is passing through an area where Special Forces are located, the conventional force can link up with Special Forces to gain a situational awareness of the area. It should be a staff function to ensure that this coordination is conducted. If the coordination is not made, the young officer knowing that the capability exists, will most likely request for Special Forces support. As mentioned in Chapter 3 the conventional forces in Haiti were not aware of Special Forces in their sectors and made no attempt to link up with Special Forces elements.

The first real opportunity for instruction in joint operations for conventional officers is at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth. The joint doctrine taught at the CGSC is primarily at the strategic and operational levels, most majors who leave CGSC work at the brigade and lower echelons for two to five years. They only have a basic level of instruction in joint operations at the operational level, and even less on conventional-SF integration. Since most future contingencies are likely to be in a joint environment, then the advance courses for the different army branches should

establish the foundation for the tactical joint level education and SF integration. To save costs mobile training teams (MTT) could be used more frequently to provide training for specific tasks that are not trained at Army institutions. MTTs could provide three to four week courses on joint operations prior to deployments then deploying forces would have a better understanding of the joint capabilities to include SOF that exist on the present battlefield. These selective courses could be provided also to educate future staffs at the operational level.

The National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, Louisiana, are becoming more modernized to represent the present-day battlefield. However, units too often still train on a unilateral basis. There is too little integration of Special Forces and conventional forces to replicate a true picture of the current requirements in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of the problems that exist today are because of the operational tempo of Special Forces elements presently engaged in the Global War on Terrorism. Even with the present operational tempo, Special Forces units should be required to participate with conventional forces in key training events. The task of integrating the forces is a very difficult one but not impossible with the right mind set and focus.

One of the weaknesses at the training centers is that they too strictly adhere to Army doctrine. Joint doctrine is often overlooked and commanders are not allowed to use doctrine as a guide at the training centers as they are able to do on the battlefield. A good example is the Joint Training Center which interprets the doctrine as only allowing a SOCCE (a Special Forces company HQ) at the corps level. In Afghanistan, the SOCCE is integrated down to the conventional battalion levels. In most cases, this is the first time

that a conventional battalion commander had the opportunity to learn how a SOCCE functions and how to use it. Training centers restrict commanders' flexibility to apply doctrine. Since conventional brigades and Special Forces battalions are normally the highest levels that go to the National Training Center, the Special Forces battalion could collocate with the conventional brigade and the SOCCE should collocate with the conventional battalions to more closely replicate the real world. This would provide the integration and knowledge that both will need on the present battlefield. This could also lead to changes in doctrine that are long past due.

The last suggestion would be to develop habitual relationships between headquarters and units that will most likely fight together. The author of this thesis was the 3rd Special Forces Group Operations Officer collocated at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, with XVIII ABN Corps. From 1999 to 2003, the 3rd Special Forces Group never worked with the tactical units of the 82nd Airborne Division who were also stationed at Fort Bragg. The units would participate in Battle Command Training Program with the XVIII Airborne Corps, but never worked with the division or lower. In 2002, the 82nd Airborne Division and the units of the 3rd Special Forces Group fought together as an integrated force for the first time in battle in Afghanistan. This fact alone should prove that we are not placing enough emphasis on habitual relationships prior to combat. In Special Forces, the units are often assigned by regions around the globe. It does not make sense to have a group whose focus is desert operations to train in a European scenario unless optempo is forcing a change. If conventional and Special Forces units were habitually aligned or trained together in predeployment Mission Rehearsal Exercises then units would be forced to synchronize procedures in order to

ensure unity of effort. We should train as we fight and not allow the operational tempo to be the deciding factor with whom we train.

The key finding of this thesis is that joint doctrine does not need to be changed. Current doctrine for C2 is a guide to determine the proper arrangement on the battlefield. The real need to solve the problem of SF-conventional C2 and integration on the modern battlefield is for all officers to read and understand the guidance outlined in joint doctrinal publications. The education of our force in joint operation will go a long way in solving most of the problems that exist in Special Forces and conventional integration.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When the Joint Task Force initially took over operations in Afghanistan the JSOTF was OPCON to the TSOC. What was the decision process and analysis that provided the outcome of the JSOTF being directly OPCON to the Joint Task Force?
2. As a Commander in or of the Joint Task Force what did you consider as the minimum acceptable command relationship between Special Forces and conventional forces?
3. Due to the segregation of SOF resources, would you agree that placing the TSOC directly OPCON to the JTF would facilitate resolving resource problems?
4. Was there any analysis on how many Special Forces ODAs would be needed in country or what type of missions the staff directly associated with Special Forces?
5. Can you think of any negative or positive points due to this relationship that was established during your tenure as Commander JTF 180?
6. In your opinion would having the JSOTF TACON, made any difference in the relationship and support provided to the JTF by the JSOTF or the subordinate forces of the JSOTF?
7. In your opinion would the Supported/ Supporting relationship work in the environment that we were presented with in Afghanistan? And if not why?
8. Did the Joint Pub doctrine definition meet the needs of operations in Operation Enduring Freedom, or do you think that the Joint Pubs should be more defined to prevent ambiguous guidance of the C2 of SOF in the future?

APPENDIX B

TIME LINE OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity/ Events</u>
11 SEP 2001	Twin towers hit by terrorist
20 SEP 2001	USASFC received deployment order for Special Forces
7 OCT 2001	US Air strikes begin over Afghanistan
NOV 2001	CFLCC established in Doha Kuwait
5 NOV 2001	Tiger 02, one of the first SF teams infil into Afghanistan
DEC 2001	5th SFG JSOTF-N moves C2 element into Kabul
FEB 2002	3rd SFG conduct PDSS with 5th SFG JSOTF-North
26 MAR 2002	3rd SFG assumes CJSOTF-Afghanistan in Bagram JSOTF TACON to TF-Mountain
JUN 2002	Joint Task Force Afghanistan under LTG McNeil stands up JSOTF becomes OPCON to JTF
JAN 2003	CFSOCC stands up for OIF

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